(19) 4676-In the heart of a banana plantation, Hawaiian Islands.

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We are 2,000 miles S. W. of San Francisco, surrounded by the vast, heaving Pacific. This is the island country whose weather is so equably fine that the natives possess no name for it.

Sugar, coffee and rice are commercially the most important products of the islands and bananas come next. The tree-like plants are raised, both in plantations of their own kind, as here, and in hedges about the coffee fields to protect those delicate plants from the winds. Each banana plant is a great sucker or shoot from an underground rootstock. It bears 50 to 150 flowers in a cluster—blossoms each with a long, tube-like ovary crowned by colored petals. After the petals have fallen the energy of the plant goes to enlarging the ovary and filling it with pulpy matter around the seeds—sometimes increasing the pulpy matter to the neglect of the seeds. The fruit matures in three to four months' time, and other suckers grow up. When suckers are transplanted they are set in rows as we see them here.

The manual labor on a plantation of this sort is performed chiefly by Chinese or Japanese. Native Hawaiians do not take kindly to regular and heavy work; for that matter the immigrant laborers now outnumber the natives two to one. The original islanders are gradually dying out. Most of the Chinese and Japanese were brought here some years ago under the terms of labor-contractors. Japan, for example, leased gangs of laborers at wholesale to the Hawaiian government and that government let them out in smaller groups to plantation managers. Individuals were practically slaves. Under existing laws such contract labor importation is of course prohibited in the case of Japan, and the Chinese are forbidden to enter at all.

In the Heart of a Banana Plantation, Hawaiian Islands.
Au milieu d'une Plantation de Bananiers, Isles Havaïennes.
Inmitten einen Bananen-Pflanzung, Sandwich-Inseln.
En medio de una Plantación de Plátanos, Islas Havay.
Uhjertat af en Bananas plantation Hawajiska oarna.
Плантація банановъ, Гавайскіе О-ва.